

REMARKS

The claims have been amended as needed so as to place them in proper U.S. form. The amendments to the claims relate only to formal matters, not merit.

Reconsideration is accordingly respectfully requested, for the rejection of certain of the claims as anticipated by DOLECEK et al. 6,280,406.

In order to permit negative pressure measurements (blood pressure less than ambient air pressure), the device of DOLECEK et al. comprises coupling means 245, 250 between the diaphragm 130 and the sensor 100.

By contrast, in the present invention, the load sensor cooperates with the external face of the associated closure element only by contact between the load sensor and the external face, without any coupling means.

In DOLECEK et al., a servo motor moves the sensor towards the diaphragm. But this movement is not for applying a given initial pretensioning force on the membrane. This movement is aimed to produce the engagement between the sensor and the membrane thanks to the coupling means. After the coupling phase, "the diaphragm is positioned away from wall to a neutral position" (column 10, lines 27-37).

In the present invention, by contrast, the sensitive member (52) is displaced towards the membrane (38) such that the

sensitive member applies a given initial pretensioning force which will be maintained, after the initial adjustment phase, during all of the pressure measurement phase, and which will permit positive and negative pressure measurements, without coupling means (page 8, lines 14-22; page 8, line 36 to page 9, line 2).

In DOLECECK et al., on the other hand, after the coupling phase there is no longer any axial force applied to the membrane by the sensor.

As the claims as amended bring out these distinctions with ample particularity, it is believed that they are all patentable, and reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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